



# Public Affairs Office

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For Immediate Release

## **Informational Background on Secretary Parker's visit to the Manteo-Shallowbag Bay (Oregon Inlet) Project set for 12 December**

**Manteo, N.C., 12 December 2001**—Today, the Honorable Mike Parker, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, will visit the Manteo area on a fact finding trip concerning the North Carolina Department of Commerce-sponsored project to build jetties at the opening of Oregon Inlet. Parker oversees activities of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, whose Wilmington District has designed the project. The project has been the subject of discussion and debate for many years, attracting both strong proponents and strong critics.

In the near future, Secretary Parker will be called upon to rule on a Record of Decision as to whether the Corps of Engineers will forward the project to Congress requesting funds for construction. For this reason, Mr. Parker, with other government officials, is today receiving detailed briefings and flying over the notoriously wild waters of the inlet to get a closer look. He will also meet with stakeholders to hear their views on the project. "I'm still gathering information as we move toward a decision," Parker told Wilmington District Officials. "This will be a great day for me to listen and learn!"

Meanwhile, study of the project by other agencies continues. During the final project review, the U.S. Department of Commerce referred several questions about the project to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). The Council plans to hold a public meeting regarding the project at the Dare County Administrative Annex this evening at 7:00 p.m. For questions about the CEQ meeting, contact at CEQ is Mr. Bill Leary, (202) 456-6550.

**Recent and anticipated future events regarding the project are listed below.**

**August 6, 2001:** The final General Design Memorandum and Environmental Impact Statement Supplements for the Manteo-Shallowbag Bay (Oregon Inlet) Project are sent to South Atlantic Division (SAD) and Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

**September 4, 2001:** The GDM and EIS are approved by SAD and HQ USACE for release for final public review.

**October 22, 2001:** The comment period based on the public review ends. Wilmington District begins preparing the final documents and Record of Decision (ROD) package for transmittal to Headquarters.

**October 16, 2001:** Department of Commerce refers several questions about the Environmental Impact Statement to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ).

**November 7, 2001:** At the request of Headquarters, USACE, the District briefs the ASA (CW) on the project.

**November 9, 2001:** Wilmington District submits answers to the questions raised by Department of Commerce to the CEQ.

**December 7, 2001:** Wilmington District submits proposed Record of Decision documentation to HQ USACE.

**December 12, 2001:** Based on the November meeting, the ASA-CW sets this date to visit Oregon Inlet on a fact-finding mission. On the same date, CEQ plans to hold a public meeting in the Manteo area to gather public opinion related to its review.

**Remaining steps include:**

The Council on Environmental Quality renders an opinion.

The Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works rules on the Record of Decision.

For further information contact Penny Schmitt, Chief of Public Affairs, Wilmington District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at (910) 251-4626.